

## Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02

SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 CU-02 DHA-02 SCCT-01 /093 W

----- 107440

O R 221714Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4972

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3230

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SF PINS

SUBJ: CONTINUED UNREST IN SOUTH AFRICA: WHAT IT MEANS

REF: PRETORIA 2761, 3214, 3193 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. SPORADIC DEMONSTRATIONS AND INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE  
THAT HAVE OCCURRED SINCE THE MAJOR WAVE OF RIOTING THAT  
OCCURRED IN SOWETO AND OTHER TRANSVAAL AFRICAN LOCATIONS IN  
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LATE JUNE APPEAR TO BE RIPPLE EFFECT FROM THE EVENTS OF JUNE

RATHER THAN MAJOR NEW TREND, ALTHOUGH PATTERN OF INCIDENTS INDICATES POSSIBILITY OF GREATER ORGANIZATION (PROBABLY THROUGH STUDENT CHANNELS) BEHIND RECENT EVENTS, AND THERE MAY BE GROWING AFRICAN ACCEPTANCE OF IDEA THAT VIOLENCE MAY BE ONLY MESSAGE SAG UNDERSTANDS. SAG CONCESSIONS HAVE NOT AMELIORATED MAJOR AFRICAN CONCERNS BUT OPPORTUNITY REMAINS FOR FURTHER CONSTRUCTIVE STEPS. GOVERNMENT ABILITY TO CONTROL SITUATION IS NOT IN QUESTION.

2. THIS ASSESSMENT SUPPLEMENTS PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF SOWETO AND IMMEDIATELY RELATED INCIDENTS CONTAINED IN PRETORIA 2761 AND SERIES OF INTERIM SPOT REPORTS. END SUMMARY.

3. POST-SOWETO DISTURBANCES HAVE FOR THE MOST PART BEEN STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS USING THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF SOWETO STUDENTS AS THEIR RALLYING CALL. THE TARGETS HAVE BEEN FAIRLY UNIFORM: SCHOOL BUILDINGS, BANTU ADMINISTRATION OFFICES AND VEHICLES, AND BOTTLE STORES OPERATED PRINCIPALLY BY THE BANTU ADMINISTRATION. ONLY THOSE TARGETS LOCATED INSIDE BLACK TOWNSHIPS OR RESIDENTIAL AREAS HAVE BEEN HIT. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF BLACKS OUTSIDE THE MORE VOLATILE STUDENT GROUPS, PRIMARILY TEENAGERS AND THOSE IN EARLY TWENTIES, HAVE BECOME INVOLVED. ON THE CONTRARY OUR INFORMATION IS THAT ABSENTEEISM WAS NO MORE THAN NORMAL DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD; THERE WAS NO DISRUPTION IN WHITE AREAS; AND THE PACE OF NORMAL COMMERCE, SPORTS, AND PERSONAL MOVEMENT WAS UNINTERRUPTED OUTSIDE THE IMMEDIATE AREAS WHERE INCIDENTS OCCURRED.

4. THE GOVERNMENT ACTED PROMPTLY TO CLAMP DOWN IN KEY METROPOLITAN AREAS TO AVOID WELL-KNOWN PLANS FOR STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS SET FOR THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS JULY 20. AS A RESULT NOTHING HAPPENED IN THESE AREAS. IN OUTLYING TOWNS IN THE TRANSVAAL AND ORANGE FREE STATE SCATTERED STUDENT-LED INCIDENTS DID TAKE PLACE ON JULY 19 AND 20 (IN WHICH ONE BLACK TEENAGER WAS KILLED, REPORTEDLY BY POLICE GUN FIRE, AND ANOTHER RUN OVER BY A TRUCK IN THE MELEE) BUT THESE WERE CONTROLLED QUICKLY WITH A LIMITED USE OF FORCE.

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5. WHAT EMERGES FROM THE CONTINUING PATTERN OF DISTURBANCES IS THAT SOME FORM OF COORDINATION IS TAKING PLACE AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL. HOW THE NETWORK OPERATES WE DO NOT KNOW. ONE EMBASSY OFFICER WAS TOLD BY BLACKS IN A REMOTE AREA OF TRANSVAAL THAT "A CARLOAD OF PEOPLE FROM JOHANNESBURG" HAD COME TO TALK TO BLACK STUDENTS ASKING THEM TO STRIKE AND DEMONSTRATE SHORTLY AFTER THE SOWETO

RIOTING ON JUNE 16. THE PATTERN OF ARRESTS INDICATES THAT SAG REGARDS THE BLACK PEOPLES CONVENTION (BPC) AND ITS ASSOCIATED STUDENT MOVEMENTS, SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENT ORGANIZATION (SASO) AND SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENT MOVEMENT (SASM), TO HAVE BEEN CENTRALLY INVOLVED.

6. AS A RESULT OF SOWETO AND ITS AFTERMATH, WE DETECT A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE AMONG BLACK AFRICANS WITH WHOM WE ARE IN CONTACT IN JOHANNESBURG, PRETORIA AND PIETERSBURG. WHILE MANY OF THEM ARE CONCERNED OVER WHERE CONTINUED VIOLENCE WILL LEAD THE BLACK COMMUNITIES, THERE IS AT THE SAME TIME AN INCREASING ACCEPTANCE OF THE IDEA THAT VIOLENCE IS THE ONLY MESSAGE WHICH WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS UNDERSTAND. FOLLOWING THE JUNE 16 SOWETO RIOTS, ONE AFRICAN BUSINESSMAN SAID; "SOWETO DID IN 12 HOURS WHAT THE NOMINAL BLACK LEADERS COULDN'T DO IN 15 YEARS." HE WAS REFERRING TO GETTING THE MINISTER OF BANTU EDUCATION TO COME TO SOWETO AND LESSEN SOME OPPRESSIVE ASPECTS OF THE SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

7. THE SAG REACTION TO THE DISTURBANCE HAS BEEN TO DEAL FIRMLY WITH THE VIOLENCE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAKING A FEW CONCESSIONS SUCH AS RELAXING RULES REQUIRING AFRIKAANS AS A LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION, ANNOUNCING PLANS FOR ELECTRIFICATION OF SOWETO, AND INDICATING THAT CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO GRANTING MORE AUTHORITY TO URBAN BANTU COUNCILS. MUCH HAS ALSO BEEN MADE PUBLICLY OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS RECEIVING PETITION-PRESENTING BLACK DELEGATIONS. WE ARE ALSO STARTING TO RECEIVE EVIDENCE SUGGESTING DISPLEASURE AT TOP ECHELONS OF GOVERNMENT WITH THE WAY BANTU ADMINISTRATION HANDLED THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE PROBLEM, AND WITH THE POLICE HANDLING OF THE INITIAL RIOTING. THERE ARE RUMORS EVEN AMONG NATIONAL PARTY MEMBERS THAT CHANGES AT SENIOR LEVELS

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OF BANTU ADMINISTRATION ARE TO BE MADE, AND POLICE HAVE OBVIOUSLY BEEN GIVEN CAREFUL ORDERS ON HANDLING DELICATE SITUATIONS.

8. WHILE THE OUTCROPPINGS OF VIOLENCE SEEM TO HAVE SPREAD GEOGRAPHICALLY, THEY ARE LIKE RIPPLES FROM SOWETO'S CENTRAL SPLASH, AND AT PRESENT DO NOT APPEAR TO REPRESENT A SERIOUS THREAT TO NORMAL ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE, OR TO THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO CONTROL THEM. NEVERTHELESS THE UNDERLYING DISCONTENT CONTINUES AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY THE EVENTS OF THE PAST MONTH. FURTHERMORE, BLACK LABOR IS INCREASINGLY AFFECTED BY THE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN AND SAG PRESSURE TO INDUCE RELOCATION OF LABOR INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES FROM WHITE POPULATION CENTERS TOWARD HOMELAND AREAS. THESE FACTORS

PROVIDE PLENTIFUL GROUNDS FOR NEW INCIDENTS TO ARISE. BUT  
THE SAG RETAINS BOTH THE POWER TO FERRET OUT AGITATORS AND  
SUPPRESS ANY LARGE-SCALE INCIDENTS, AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
INTRODUCE STEPS WHICH COULD DE-FUSE AMONG BROAD SEGMENTS  
OF THE POPULATION ANY INCLINATION TO ENGAGE IN FURTHER, OPEN  
VIOLENCE. SAG APPEARS TO BE TAKING SITUATION SERIOUSLY AND  
TO BE SEARCHING FOR MEANS TO PREVENT FURTHER DISRUPTION.  
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